



# **STATE MINING AND GEOLOGY BOARD**

## **Surface Mining Standards Committee**

*J. C. Isham, Chair; Cheryl Bly-Chester; Kathy Lund*

### **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**



**ARNOLD  
SCHWARZENEGGER  
GOVERNOR**

**For Meeting Date: September 11, 2008**

**Agenda Item No. 2: Consideration of a Reclamation Plan for the Big Cut Mine (CA Mine ID #91-09-00XX), Mr. Rick Churches and Joseph and Yvette Hardesty (Operators/Agents), El Dorado County.**

**INTRODUCTION:** Under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA, Public Resources Code Section (PRC) 2710 et seq.), a surface mining operation must have a reclamation plan and financial assurance approved by its respective lead agency. The State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) is the SMARA lead agency for El Dorado County, and is responsible for the review and approval of reclamation plans, financial assurances, and environmental documents. The Surface Mining Standards Committee (Committee) is considering recommending approval of a Reclamation Plan for the surface mining operation known as the Big Cut Quarry, located in El Dorado County, upon completion of an environmental study pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The Big Cut Mine (Formerly Donovan Ranch) surface mine site is located in El Dorado County immediately south of the City of Placerville, and situated on a south-facing slope, and characterized by two distinct east-west oriented benches. The site is accessed via the sinuous Big Cut Road. The east-west oriented entrance road is situated on the upper bench, with access roads leading to the lower bench, and a newly unpermitted access/haul road further south along Big Cut Road has been constructed. The site is currently zoned Agricultural (A). The proposed end use is cattle grazing and agriculture.

The site encompasses about 31 acres out of a total land holding of 131 acres. About 15 acres have been disturbed by past surface mining activities. The site is underlain by meta-sedimentary basement rocks of Paleozoic age (230 to 600 million years before present; mybp), and three Tertiary age (1 to 63 mybp) sedimentary rock formations including auriferous gravels.

The proposed reclamation plan was reviewed by OMR and SMGB staff, and considered consistent and complete in meeting the minimum requirements of SMARA and the SMGB's regulations.



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**COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS:** The Committee may take the following actions:

1. Approve, as adequate, the Reclamation Plan, without additions;

[or]

2. Modify the Reclamation Plan, with Additions, and then accept the documents as adequate;

[or]

3. Reject the Reclamation Plan, as inadequate, and order the operator for it to be redone.

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Reclamation Plan was reviewed by OMR and SMGB staff. The Executive Officer has reviewed the April 23, 2007 (Revised July 11, 2008) Reclamation Plan for the Big Cut Mine, and recommends that the Committee accepts the reclamation plan as adequate and prepared in accordance with the SMARA (PRC Section 2710, et seq.), and the SMGB's regulations (California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14, Chapter 8, Article 1, Section 3500, et seq.; Article 9, Section 3700, et seq.).

**SUGGESTED COMMITTEE MOTION:**

To recommend approval the Reclamation Plan:

*Mr. Chairman, in light of the information before the State Mining and Geology Board today, I move that the Committee recommend to the whole Board, upon completion of the environmental study pursuant to CEQA, approval of the April 23, 2007 (Revised July 11, 2008) Reclamation Plan for the surface mining operation known as Big Cut Mine located in El Dorado County, as complete and prepared in accordance with the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act, the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 and the Board's regulations.*

Respectfully submitted:

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Stephen M. Testa  
Executive Officer